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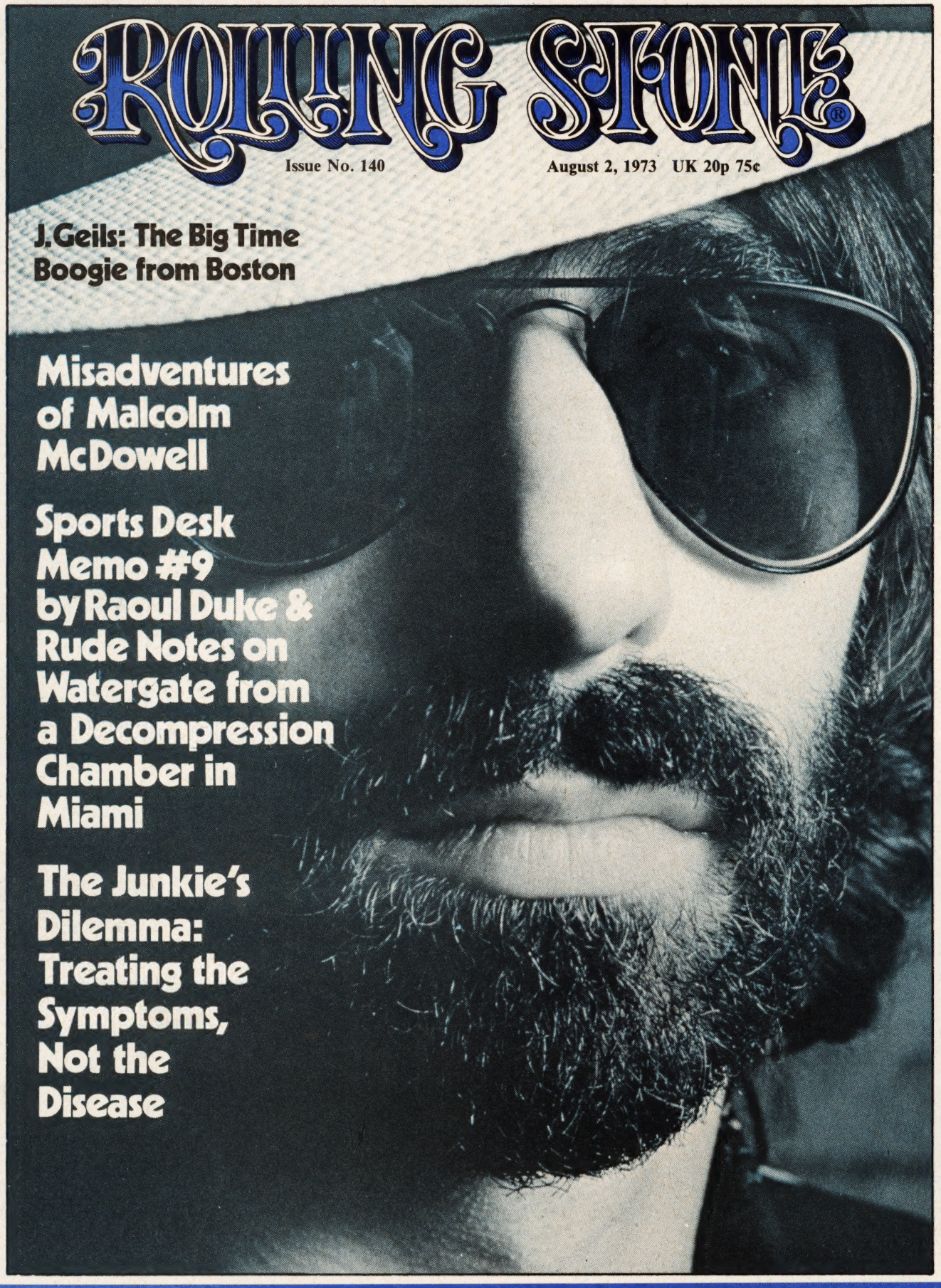

J. Geils: The Big Time Boogie from Boston

Misadventures of Malcolm McDowell

Sports Desk Memo #9 by Raoul Duke & Rude Notes on Watergate from a Decompression Chamber in Miami

The Junkie's Dilemma: Treating the Symptoms, Not the Disease

Memo from the Sports Desk & Rude Notes from a Decompression Chamber in Miami

There is no joy in Woody Creek tonight—at least not in the twisted bowels of this sinkhole of political iniquity called the Owl Farm—because, 2000 miles away in the swampy heat of Washington, D.C., my old football buddy, Dick Nixon, is lashing around in bad trouble. . . . The vultures are coming home to roost—like he always feared they would, in the end—and it hurts me in a way nobody would publish if I properly described it, to know that I can't be with him on the sweaty ramparts today, stomping those dirty buzzards like Davy Crockett bashing spics off the walls of the Alamo.

"Delta Dawn . . . What's that flower you have on?"

Fine music on my radio as dawn comes up on the Rockies . . . But suddenly the music ends and ABC (American Entertainment Network) News interrupts: Martha Mitchell is demanding that "Mister President" either resign or be impeached, for reasons her addled tongue can only hint at . . . and Charles "Tex" Colson, the President's erstwhile *special counsel,* is denying all statements & sworn testimony, by anybody, linking him to burglaries, fire-bombings, wire-tappings, perjuries, payoffs and other routine felonies in connexion with his job at the White House . . . and President Nixon is relaxing, as it were, in his personal beach-front mansion at San Clemente, California, surrounded by the scuzzy remnants of his once imperial guard. . . . Indeed, you can almost hear the rattle of martini-cups along the airwaves as Gerald Warren—Ron Ziegler's doomed replacement—cranks another hastily rewritten paragraph (Amendment No. 67 to Paragraph No. 13 of President Nixon's original statement denying everything . . .) into the overheated Dex machine to the White House, for immediate release to the national media . . . and the White House press room is boiling with guilt-crazed journalists, ready to pounce on any new statement like a pack of wild African dogs, to atone for all the things they knew but never wrote when Nixon was riding high. . . .

Why does Nixon use the clumsy Dex, instead of the Mojo? Why does he drink martinis, instead of Wild Turkey? Why does he wear boxer shorts? Why is his life a grim monument to everything plastic, de-sexed and non-sensual? When I look at Nixon's White House I have a sense of *absolute* personal alienation. The President and I seem to disagree on almost *everything*—except pro football, and Nixon's addiction to that has caused me to view it with a freshly jaundiced eye, or what the late John Foster Dulles called "an agonizing reappraisal." Anything Nixon likes *must* be suspect. Like cottage cheese and catsup . . .

"The Dex machine." Jesus! Learning that Nixon and his people use *this*—instead of the smaller, quicker, more versatile (and portable) Mojo Wire—was almost the final insult: coming on the heels of the Gross sense of Injury I felt when I saw that my name was not included on the infamous "Enemies of the White House" list.

I would almost have preferred a vindictive tax audit to that kind of crippling exclusion. Christ! What kind of waterheads compiled that list? How can I show my face in the Jerome Bar, when word finally reaches Aspen that I wasn't on it?

Fortunately, the list was drawn up in the summer of '71—which partially explains why my name was missing. It was not until the autumn of '72 that I began referring to The President, in nationally circulated print, as a Cheapjack Punk and a Lust-Maddened Werewolf, whose very existence was (and remains) a bad cancer on the American political tradition. Every ad the publishers prepared for my book on the 1972 Campaign led off with a savage slur on all that Richard Nixon ever hoped to represent or stand for. The man is a walking embarrassment to tne human race—and especially, as Bobby Kennedy once noted, to that high, optimistic potential that fueled men like Jefferson and Madison, and which Abe Lincoln once described as "the last, best hope of man."

There is slim satisfaction in the knowledge that my exclusion from the (1971) list of "White House enemies" has more to do with timing and Ron Ziegler's refusal to read ROLLING STONE than with the validity of all the things I've said and written about that evil bastard.

I was, after all, the only accredited journalist covering the 1972 presidential campaign to compare Nixon with Adolf Hitler. . . . I was the only one to describe him as a congenital thug, a fixer with the personal principles of a used-car salesman. And when these distasteful excesses were privately censured by the docile White House press corps, I compounded my flirtation with Bad Taste by describing the White House correspondents as a gang of lame whores & sheep without the balls to even argue with Ron Ziegler—who kept them all dancing to Nixon's bogus tune, until it became suddenly fashionable to see him for the hired liar he was and has been all along.

The nut of my complaint here—in addition to being left off The List—is rooted in a powerful resentment at not being recognized (not even by Ziegler) for the insults I heaped on Nixon *before* he was laid low. This is a matter of journalistic ethics—or perhaps even "sportsmanship"—and I take a certain pride in knowing that I kicked Nixon before he went down. Not afterwards—though I plan to do *that,* too, as soon as possible.

And I feel no more guilt about it than I would about setting a rat trap in my kitchen, if it ever seemed necessary—and certainly no more guilt than I know Nixon would feel about hiring some thug like Gordon Liddy to set me up for a felony charge, if my name turned up on his List.

When they update the bugger, I plan to be on it. My attorney is even now preparing my tax records, with an eye to confrontation. When the next list of "White House enemies" comes out, I want to be on it. My son will never forgive me—ten years from now—if I fail to clear my name and get grouped, for the record, with those whom Richard Milhous Nixon considered dangerous.

Dick Tuck feels the same way. He was sitting in my kitchen, watching the TV set, when Sam Donaldson began reading The List on ABC-TV.

"Holy shit!" Tuck muttered. "We're not *on* it."

"Don't worry," I said grimly. "We *will* be."

"What can we *do?*" he asked.

"Kick out the jams," I said. "Don't worry, Dick. When the next list comes out, we'll *be there.* I guarantee that."

—Dr. Hunter S. Thompson
"Rude Notes from a Decompression Chamber in Miami" . . . June '73

FROM:

Raoul Duke, Sports Editor

TO:

Main/Edit Control

C.C.:

Legal, Finance, Security, et al.

SUBJECT:

Imminent emergence of Dr. Thompson from the Decompression Chamber in Miami, and probable inability of the Sports Desk or anyone else to control his movements at that time . . . especially in connection with his ill-conceived plan to move the National Affairs Desk back to Washington and bring Ralph Steadman over from England to cause trouble at the Watergate Hearings . . .

EDITORS' NOTE:

The following intra-corporate memo arrived by Mojo wire from Colorado shortly before deadline time for this issue. It was greeted with mixed emotions by all those potentially afflicted . . . and because of the implications, we felt a certain obligation to lash up a quick, last-minute explanation . . . primarily for those who have never understood the real function of Raoul Duke (whose official title is "sports editor"), and also for the many readers whose attempts to reach Dr. Thompson by mail, phone & other means have not borne fruit.

The circumstances of Dr. Thompson's removal from the Public World have been a carefully guarded secret for the past several months. During the last week of March—after a strange encounter with Henry Kissinger while on "vacation" in Acapulco—Dr. Thompson almost drowned when his SCUBA tanks unexplainably ran out of air while diving for black coral off the Yucatan Coast of Mexico, at a depth of some 300 feet. His rapid emergence from these depths—according to witnesses—resulted in a near-fatal case of the Bends, and an emergency-chartered/night-flight to the nearest decompression chamber, which happened to be in Miami.

Dr. Thompson was unconscious in the decompression chamber—a round steel cell about 12 feet in diameter—for almost three weeks. When he finally regained his wits it was impossible to speak with him, except by means of a cracked loudspeaker tube & brief handwritten notes held up to the window. A television set was introduced into the chamber at his insistence and, by extremely complicated maneuvering, he was able to watch the Watergate hearings . . . but, due to the dangerous differences in pressurization, he was unable to communicate anything but garbled notes on his impressions to Duke, his long-time friend and associate who flew to Miami immediately, at his own expense.

When it became apparent that Dr. Thompson would be in the chamber indefinitely, Duke left him in Miami—breathing easily in the chamber with a TV set & several notebooks—and returned to Colorado, where he spent the past three months handling the Doktor's personal & business affairs, in addition to organizing the skeletal framework for his 1974 Senate Race.

It was a familiar role for Duke, who has been Dr. Thompson's close friend & adviser since 1968—after 14 years of distinguished service in the CIA, the FBI and the Pittsburgh (Pa.) Police Intelligence Unit. His duties, since hiring on with Dr. Thompson, have been understandably varied. He has been described as "a weapons expert," a "ghostwriter," a "bodyguard," a "wizard" and a "brutal fixer."

"Compared to the things I've done for Thompson," Duke says, "both Gordon Liddy and Howard Hunt were stone *punks.*"

It is clear, from this memo, that Duke has spent a good bit of his time in Colorado watching the Watergate hearings on TV—but it is also clear that his tentative conclusions are very different from the ones Dr. Thompson reached, from his admittedly singular vantage point in that decompression chamber in downtown Miami.

The editors of ROLLING STONE would prefer not to comment on *either* of these viewpoints at this time, nor to comment on the nightmare/blizzard of Expense Vouchers submitted, by Duke, in connexion with this dubious memo. In accordance with our long tradition, however, we are placing the Public Interest (publication of Duke's memo, in this case) on a plane far above and beyond our inevitably mundane haggling about the cost of breakfast and lunch.

What follows, then, is a jangled mix of Duke's official communications with this office, and Thompson's "Watergate Notes" (forwarded to us, by Duke) from his decompression chamber in Miami. The chronology is not entirely consistent. Duke's opening note, for instance, reflects his concern & alarm with Dr. Thompson's decision to go directly from Miami—once the doctors have confirmed his ability to function in normal air-pressures—to the harsh & politically-volatile atmosphere in Washington, D.C. Unlike Duke, he seems blindly obsessed with the day-to-day details of the Watergate hearings . . . and what is also clear from this memo is that Dr. Thompson has maintained regular contact (despite all medical and physical realities, according to the doctors in charge of his Chamber in Miami) with his familiar, campaign trail allies, Tim Crouse and Ralph Steadman. An invoice received only yesterday, from the manager of the Watergate Hotel, indicates that somebody has reserved a top-floor river-view suite, under the names of "Thompson, Steadman & Crouse" . . . four adjoining rooms at $277 a day, with a long list of special equipment and an unlimited in-house expense authorization.

Needless to say, we will . . . but, why mention that now? The dumb buggers are already into it, and *something* is bound to emerge. We can save the bargaining for later. . . .

—The Editors

DUKE MEMO No. 9 July 2, 1973

Gentlemen:

This will confirm my previous warnings in re: the dangerously unstable condition of Dr. Thompson, whose most recent communications leave no doubt in my mind that he still considers himself the National Affairs Editor of ROLLING STONE—and in that capacity he has somehow made arrangements to fly immediately from Miami to Washington, upon his release, to "cover" the remaining episodes of the Watergate Hearings. I have no idea what he really means by the word "cover"—but a phone-talk late last night with his doctors gave me serious pause. He will leave The Chamber at the end of this week, and he's talking in terms of "saturation coverage." According to the doctors, there is no way to communicate with him in the Chamber except by notes held up to the glass window—but I suspect he has a phone in there, because he has obviously communicated at length with Crouse, Steadman, Mankiewicz and several others. A person resembling Crouse was seen loitering around the Chamber last

—Continued on Next Page

Ralph STEADman

DUKE MEMO No. 9

—Continued from Preceding Page

Monday night around 3:30 AM . . . and a call to Steadman's agent in London confirmed that Ralph has left his hideout in the south of France and is booked on a Paris-Washington flight next Thursday, the day before Thompson's release.

Mankiewicz denies everything, as usual, but I talked to Sam Brown in Denver yesterday and he said the word around Washington is that Frank is "acting very nervous" and also ordering Wild Turkey "by the case" from Chevy Chase Liquors. This indicates, to me, that Frank knows something. He has probably been talking to Crouse, but Tim's number in Boston won't answer, so I can't confirm anything there.

—00000—

Dr. Squane, the Bends Specialist in Miami, says Thompson is "acceptably rational"—whatever that means—and that they have no reason to keep him in The Chamber beyond Friday. My insistence that he be returned at once to Colorado—under guard if necessary—has not been taken seriously in Miami. The bill for his stay in The Chamber—as you know—is already over $3000, and they are not anxious to keep him there any longer than absolutely necessary. I got the impression, during my talk with Doc Squane last night, that Thompson's stay in The Chamber has been distinctly unpleasant for the staff. "I'll never understand why he didn't just wither up and die," Squane told me. "Only a *monster* could survive that kind of trauma."

I sensed disappointment in his voice, but I saw no point in arguing. We've been through this before, right? And it's always the same gig. My only concern for right now—as Thompson's de facto personal guardian—is to make sure he doesn't get involved in serious trouble, if he's serious about going to Washington.

Which he *is*, I suspect—and that means, if nothing else, that he'll be running up huge bills on the ROLLING STONE tab. Whether or not he will write anything coherent is a moot point, I think, because *whatever* he writes—if anything—will necessarily be long out of date by the time it appears in print. Not even the Washington Post and the New York Times, which arrive daily (but three days late) out here in Woody Creek, can compete with the spontaneous, brain-boggling horrors belching constantly out of the TV set.

Last Saturday afternoon, for instance, I was sitting here very peacefully—minding the store, as it were—when the tube suddenly erupted with a genuinely *obscene* conversation between Mike Wallace and John Ehrlichman.

I was sitting on the porch with Gene Johnston—one of Dr. Thompson's old friends and ex-general manager of the Aspen Wallposter—when Sandy called us inside to watch the show. Ehrlichman's face was so awful, so obviously mired in a lifetime of lies and lame treachery, that it was just about impossible to watch him in our twisted condition.

"Jesus Christ, *look* at him!" Johnston kept muttering. "Two months ago, that bastard was *running the country*." He opened a beer and whacked it down on the table. "I never want to hear the word 'paranoid' again, goddamnit! Not after seeing *that* face!" He reeled towards the front door, shaking his head and mumbling: "God damn! I can't *stand* it!"

I watched the whole thing, myself, but not without problems. It reminded me of *Last Exit to Brooklyn*—the rape of a bent whore—but I also knew Dr. Thompson was watching the show in Miami, and that it would fill him with venom & craziness. Whatever small hope we might have had of keeping him away from Washington during this crisis was burned to a cinder by the Wallace-Ehrlichman show. It had the effect of reinforcing Thompson's conviction that Nixon has cashed his check—and that possibility alone is enough to lure him to Washington for the deathwatch.

My own prognosis is less drastic, at this point in time [sic], but it's also a fact that I've never been able to share The Doktor's obsessive political visions—for good or ill. My job has to do with nuts & bolts, not terminal vengeance. And it also occurs to me that there is nothing in the Watergate revelations, thus far, to convince anyone but a stone partisan fanatic that we will all be better off when it's finished. As I see it, we have already reaped the *real* benefits of this spectacle—the almost accidental castration of dehumanized powermongers like Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Tom Charles Huston, that vicious young jackal of a lawyer from Indianapolis that Nixon put in charge of the Special Domestic Intelligence operation.

Dumping thugs like these out of power for the next three years gives us all new room to breathe, for a while—which is just about all we can hope for, given the nature of the entrenched (Democratic) opposition. Nixon himself is no problem, now that all his ranking thugs have been neutralized. Just imagine what those bastards might have done, given three more years on their own terms.

Even a casual reading of White House memorandums in re: Domestic Subversives & Other White House Enemies (Bill Cosby, James Reston, Paul Newman, Joe Namath, et al.) is enough to queer the faith of any American less liberal than Mussolini. Here is a paragraph from one of his (September 21, 1970) memos to Harry "Bob" Haldeman:

"What we cannot do in a courtroom via criminal prosecutions to curtail the activities of some of these groups, IRS [the Internal Revenue Service] could do by administrative action. Moreover, valuable intelligence-type information could be turned up by IRS as a result of their field audits. . . ."

Dr. Thompson—if he were with us & certifiably de-pressurized at this point in time—could offer some first-hand testimony about how the IRS and the Treasury Department were used, back in 1970, to work muscle on Ideological Enemies like himself . . . and if Thompson's account might be shrugged off as "biased," we can always compel the testimony of Aspen police chief, Dick Richey, whose office safe still holds an illegal sawed-off shotgun belonging to a US Treasury Department undercover agent from Denver who fucked up in his efforts to convince Dr. Thompson that he should find a quick reason for dropping out of electoral politics. That incident came up the other afternoon at the Jerome Bar in Aspen, when Steve Levine, a young reporter from Denver, observed that "Thompson was one of the original victims of the Watergate syndrome—but nobody recognized it then; they called it Paranoia."

Right . . . But that's another story, and we'll leave it for the Doktor to tell. After three months in the Decompression Chamber, he will doubtless be cranked up to the fine peaks of frenzy. His "Watergate notes from the Chamber" show a powerful, brain-damaged kind of zeal that will hopefully be brought under control in the near future . . . and I'm enclosing some of them here, as crude evidence to show he's still functioning, despite the tragic handicap that comes with a bad case of the Bends.

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In closing, I remain . . . Yrs. in Fear & Loathing:

Raoul Duke, Spts. Ed.

Editor's Note: What follows is the unfinished mid-section of Dr. Thompson's Notes from the Decompression Chamber. This section was written in his notebook on the day after convicted Watergate burglar James McCord's appearance before the Ervin committee on national TV. It was transcribed by a nurse who copied Dr. Thompson's notes as he held them up, page by page, through the pressure-sealed window of his Chamber. It is not clear, from the text, whether he deliberately wrote this section with a "Woody Creek, Colorado" dateline, or whether he planned to be there by the time it was printed.

In either case, he was wrong. His case of the Bends was severe, almost fatal. And even upon his release there is no real certainty of recovery. He might have to re-enter the Decompression Chamber at any time, if he suffers a relapse.

None of which has any bearing on what follows—which was published exactly as he wrote it in the Chamber:

Jesus, where will it end? Yesterday I turned on my TV set—hungry for some decent upbeat news—and here was an ex-Army Air Force colonel with 19 years in the CIA under his belt admitting that he'd willfully turned himself into a common low-life burglar because he thought the Attorney General and The President of the US had more or less *ordered* him to. Ex-Colonel McCord felt he had a duty to roam around the country burglarizing offices and ransacking private/personal files—because the security of the USA was at stake.

Indeed, we were in serious trouble last year—and for five or six years before that, if you believe the muck those two vicious and irresponsible young punks at the Washington Post have raked up.

"Impeachment" is an ugly word, they say. Newsweek columnist Shana Alexander says "all but the vulture-hearted want to believe him ignorant." A week earlier, Ms. Alexander wrote a "love letter" to Martha Mitchell: "You are in the best tradition of American womanhood, defending your country, your flag . . . but most of all, defending your man."

Well . . . shucks. I can hardly choke back the tears . . . and where does that leave Pat Nixon, who apparently went on a world cruise under a different name the day after McCord pulled the plug and wrote that devastating letter to Judge Sirica.

The public prints—and especially Newsweek—are full of senile gibberish these days. Stewart Alsop wakes up in a cold sweat every morning at the idea that Congress might be forced to impeach "The President."

For an answer to that, we can look to Hubert Humphrey—from one of the nine speeches he made during his four-and-a-half hour campaign for Democratic candidate George McGovern in the waning weeks of last November's presidential showdown—Humphrey was talking to a crowd of hardhats in S.F., as I recall, and he said, "My friends, we're not talking about re-electing the President—we're talking about re-electing Richard Nixon."

Even a blind pig finds an acorn now and then. Humphrey's voice just belched out of my radio, demanding that we *get to the bottom of this Watergate mess,* but meanwhile we have to make sure the Ruskies understand that we all stand firmly behind The President.

Right. As far behind him as possible, if GOP standard-bearers like B. Goldwater and Hugh Scott are any measure of the party's allegiance to the frightened unprincipled little shyster they were calling—when they nominated him for re-canonization ten months ago in Miami—"one of the greatest Presidents in American History." We will want those tapes for posterity because we won't hear their like again—from Scott, Goldwater, Duke Wayne, Martha, Sammy Davis, Senator Percy or anyone else. Not even George Meany will join a foursome with Richard Nixon these days. The hallowed halls of the White House no longer echo with the happy sound of bouncing golf balls. Or footballs either, for that matter . . . or any other kind.

The hard-nosed super-executives Nixon chose to run this country for us turned on each other like rats in a slumfire when the first signs of trouble appeared. What we have seen in the past few weeks is the incredible spectacle of a President of the United States either firing or being hastily abandoned by all of his hired hands and cronies—all the people who put him where he is today, in fact, and now that they're gone he seems helpless. Some of his closest "friends" and advisers are headed for prison, his once-helpless Democratic Congress is verging on mutiny, the threat of impeachment looms closer every day, and his coveted "place in history" is even now being etched out in acid by eager Harvard historians.

Six months ago Richard Nixon was Zeus himself, calling firebombs and shitrains down on friend and foe alike—the most powerful man in the world, for a while—but all that is gone now and nothing he can do will ever bring a hint of it back. Richard Nixon's seventh crisis will be his last. He will go down with Harding and Grant as one of America's classically rotten presidents.

Which is exactly what he deserves—and if saying that makes me "one of the vulture-hearted," by Ms. Alexander's lights . . . well . . . I think I can live with it. My grandmother was one of those stunned old ladies who cried when the Duke of Windsor quit the Big Throne to marry an American commoner back in 1936. She didn't know the Duke or anything about him. But she knew—along with millions of other old ladies and closet monarchists—that a Once and Future King had a duty to keep up the act. She wept for her lost illusions—for the same reason Stewart Alsop and Shana Alexander will weep tomorrow if President Richard M. Nixon is impeached and put on trial by the US Senate.

Our Congressmen will do everything possible to avoid it, because most of them have a deep and visceral sympathy, however denied and reluctant, for the "tragic circumstances" that led Richard Nixon to what even Evans and Novak call "the brink of ruin." The loyal opposition has not distinguished itself in the course of this long-running nightmare. Even Nixon's oldest enemies are lying low, leaving the dirty work to hired lawyers and faceless investigators. Senators Kennedy, McGovern and Fulbright are strangely silent, while Humphrey babbles nonsense and Muskie hoards his energy for beating back personal attacks by Strom Thurmond. The only politicians talking publicly about the dire implications of the Watergate iceberg are those who can't avoid it—the four carefully selected eunuch/Democrats on the Senate Select Investigating Committee and a handful of panicked Republicans up for re-election in 1974.

The slow-rising central horror of "Watergate" is not that it might grind down to the reluctant impeachment of a vengeful thug of a president whose entire political career has been a monument to the same kind of cheap shots and treachery he finally got nailed for, but that we might somehow fail to learn something from it.

Already—with the worst news yet to come—there is an ominous tide of public opinion that says whatever Nixon and his small gang of henchmen and hired gunsels might have done, it was probably no worse than what other politicians have been doing all along, and still are.

Anybody who really believes this is a fool—but a lot of people seem to, and that evidence is hard to ignore. What almost happened here—and what was only avoided because the men who made Nixon President and who were running the country in his name knew in their hearts, that they were all mean, hollow little bastards who couldn't dare turn their backs on each other—was a takeover and total perversion of the American political process by a gang of cold-blooded fixers so incompetent that they couldn't even pull off a simple burglary . . . which tends to explain, among other things, why 25,000 young Americans died for no reason in Vietnam while Nixon and his brain trust were trying to figure out how to admit the whole thing was a mistake from the start.

At press time, the National Affairs Suite in Washington had been reopened and prepared for "total coverage." Thompson arrived there July 7th, and we expect his reports soon.